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Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
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Special theme: the Millennium Development Goals and indigenous peoples: redefining the Goals

Draft recommendations submitted by the Rapporteur

Special theme: the Millennium Development Goals and indigenous peoples: redefining the Goals

1. Indigenous peoples organizations are encouraged to assist in the monitoring of the Millennium Development Goals in their countries and submit information to the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues regarding progress in that regard.

2. The United Nations system is encouraged to support the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples in efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals at the national and local levels.

3. There generally appears to be positive recognition of the approach suggested by the Forum to Goal 1, while less attention has been paid to Goal 2. In both areas there appears to be an increase in the number of projects being implemented in Latin America, with limited projects in Asia, and one or two projects in Africa. This is particularly the case under Goal 2, where there is a general lack of reporting on intercultural/bilingual education projects or programmes from Asia or Africa in this area.

4. In follow-up to the Millennium Development Goals, the Permanent Forum urges Governments and agencies to quantify the number of projects and programmes that they are undertaking in response to the recommendations of the Forum. It would also be helpful, when reporting, if they could report on progress in the process of implementation of recommendations, rather than merely enumerating activities. Reports could be more analytical, not just activity-based, and should pick up on relevant recommendations from past sessions that address the necessary theme.

5. As a measure of redefining approaches, countries with indigenous peoples are urged to incorporate the issues and challenges specifically faced by indigenous peoples directly into the framework of the Millennium Development Goal reports

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by: (a) including indigenous peoples within the context of the overall report; (b) including indigenous peoples in the context of meeting each specific goal; (c) including indigenous peoples in the planning of the overall report and each individual goal; and (d) including indigenous peoples' effective participation in the planning process of future interventions, and in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programmes and projects that will directly or indirectly affect them.

6. The Forum appoints Victoria Tauli-Corpuz and Parshuram Tamang as Special Rapporteurs to prepare a working paper, without financial implications, in cooperation with indigenous peoples organizations, Governments and other relevant institutions, on palm oil development, commercial tree plantations and mono-cropping and on their impacts on indigenous peoples' land tenure and resource management systems and livelihoods.

7. The Forum welcomes the conclusion of a feasibility study by the United Nations University to establish a research and training centre of traditional knowledge, and recommends that, should the Centre be established, indigenous traditional knowledge should be a central focus of research and indigenous experts be part of the research staff.

8. Indigenous traditional knowledge not only sustains indigenous and local communities in their daily lives, but it is also a key element of their identity and self-determination. Such knowledge of indigenous communities, which reflects their holistic world views, also contributes to the world's cultural and biological diversity and is a source of cultural and economic wealth for the communities and humanity as a whole. Indigenous knowledge systems are, however, subject to a variety of threats. In response, numerous practical, legislative and policy initiatives are under way at the community, national, regional and international levels to enhance the protection of indigenous traditional knowledge. However, as stressed by the indigenous experts who took part in the International Technical Workshop on Indigenous Traditional Knowledge (September 2005, Panama), respect for the rights of indigenous peoples, in particular their human rights, is at the heart of their concerns about the preservation, the promotion and the protection of traditional knowledge and cultural expressions. Due consideration of those concerns and perspectives, while preserving, promoting and protecting the traditional knowledge and cultural expressions of indigenous communities, will have a direct bearing on the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

9. The Forum welcomes and endorses the recommendations of the above-mentioned workshop on indigenous traditional knowledge by emphasizing paragraphs 61-74 of the report of the workshop (E/C.19/2006/2).

10. The protection of traditional knowledge is an important issue for indigenous groups, yet many feel that the intellectual property system fails to adequately safeguard traditional knowledge. A number of actions have been proposed by developing countries and others in order to redress the imbalances in the intellectual property system at the international level. One key proposal is to require the disclosure of the origin or source of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge in relevant patent applications. This would help countries keep track of how their genetic resources are being used and patented abroad. Such a requirement could also include evidence of prior informed consent and benefit-sharing.

11. The Forum reiterates its recommendations of its second, third and fourth sessions on HIV/AIDS regarding data disaggregation and culturally appropriate HIV/AIDS programmes,[1] and urges Governments, the United Nations system and intergovernmental organizations to ensure the full and effective participation, and free, prior and informed consent, of indigenous peoples in all programmes related to the prevention and treatments of HIV/AIDS in indigenous communities.

12. Governments, the United Nations system and donor agencies are urged to support the formation of an international network of traditional healers who work with HIV/AIDS patients and organize expert meetings on HIV/AIDS and traditional medicine between traditional and medical practitioners.

13. The Permanent Forum expresses its support for the Toronto Charter — Indigenous Peoples' Action Plan on HIV/AIDS, and urges the International AIDS Conference, which will be held in August 2006, in Toronto, Canada, to take note of its contents and indigenous peoples' rights to health and well-being, and requests that an invitation be extended to the Permanent Forum to attend.

14. The Forum recommends that the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Issues convene a technical workshop on indicators, in collaboration with the United Nations agencies dealing with this issue, with the participation of indigenous experts, with a view to promoting a collaborative, complementary and holistic approach to indicators in order to enhance understanding of indigenous concerns and their possible solution, and requests the workshop to submit its report to the Forum at its sixth session.

[1] E/C.19/2003/22, paras. 70, 75, 76; E/C.19/2004/23, paras. 88-89 and E/C.19/2005/9, para. 118.